

A N
ADDRESS
TO THE
FREE AND INDEPENDANT
CITIZENS
OF THE
UNITED STATES
OF
NORTH-AMERICA.

BY SILAS DEANE, Esquire.

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To the Free and Independant Citizens of the United States of North-America.

THE happy period being arrived, in which we may in peace, take a review of the scenes, through which we have passed, and with calmness and impartiality examine and judge of past transactions, encourages me to come forward, and to address you, on a subject of infinite importance to myself, and of so much to you, as to excuse me, from the making any previous apology, on the occasion.---Perhaps I ought rather to make one, for my having been so long silent, under the many heavy charges, brought against me, in the public papers, in America.---Neither a want of sufficient proofs, to refute them, or any indifference, as to the opinion of my countrymen, occasioned my silence, but the reflection, that during the rage, and violence of war, and while party prejudices, heats and jealousies, were in their full force, it was by no means the time for a cool, and dispassionate discussion, of any subject, on which, appearances had already prejudiced the minds of the public.

I resolved to improve the first moment, of public peace, and tranquility, to appear, and to plead my cause, at your bar; during near three years of misfortunes, and exile, I have impatiently looked for it; I now flatter myself, that it is arrived, and in that confidence, venture to call your attention to my case.

It is of some importance, to you, to know, if one, who formerly had your confidence, to a great degree, actually betrayed, and deserted you, and was guilty of the frauds, speculation, and treachery, with which he has been charged; or if artful, and designing men, inimical to him, have taken the advantage of his weakness, or imprudence, to charge him with those enormous crimes; to excite a general clamour against him, and from his silence, to infer in the strongest manner, his guilt.---Though I may solicit your examination, of the subject, at this time, under very great disadvantages, yet I am by no means thereby deterred, from
doing

doing it ; as yet, you have heard but one side of the question, and that at a time, when your situation, made you justly apprehensive, and jealous of danger, from every quarter, and rendered you, as it were, feelingly alive in every pore ; at present, when we are happily freed, from the alarms, and dangers of war, you will not refuse, to hear the other part, and thereby become capable, of judging on the whole, with certainty, and with justice, to the accusers, as well as to the accused ; which is all I ask, or wish for---unwilling to take up more of your time, than is absolutely necessary, I shall not in this address, recapitulate the many surmises, and insinuations, thrown out against me, by my enemies, in the course of their persecutions of me, but confine myself, to the direct charges against me, which are all of them, comprehended under two heads :

First, that I was guilty of fraud, and speculation, in the management, of the public monies, committed to my care ; and secondly, that after my return to France, in 1781, I wrote those letters, which were intercepted, and published in New-York, from interested motives, and with the base and treacherous design, to injure my country ; having engaged myself in the interest of her enemies.

If on an impartial examination of facts, you shall judge me guilty, of these crimes, nothing that has hitherto been said, or done against me, will be deemed unjust, or too severe ; but if on the other hand, you shall, from the most unquestionable facts, and circumstances, find those charges, to be false, and groundless, whatever weakness, or imprudence, you may find me justly chargeable with, you will at least, acquit me of any thing criminal, and pronounce me to be "*A man more sinned against, than sinning.*"

My conduct in the early part, of the late contest, and until my leaving America, in April 1776, to go for France, in the character of Commercial, and Political Agent, and Commissioner for the United States, is too well known, to require my referring to any part of it.---The charges against me, originate after that period ; previous to it, I had no charge of public monies. I arrived in France, in June 1776, and acted as sole Commercial, and Political Agent, for the United States until the month of December following, when I received a commission, from Congress, appointing Doctor Franklin, Mr. Lee, and myself, their joint Commissioners

missioners Plenipotentiary, and I continued to act, in this character, until the first of April 1778, when in obedience to the orders of Congress, I left Paris, on my return to America, and from that period, to the present hour, have not been entrusted with the monies of the public, or with any public employ whatever; it therefore follows, that if frauds, peculation, and embezzlements, were practised, and committed by me, they must have been in, and during that period, that is between April 1776, and April 1778, ---and that I must have committed them, in my transactions at Paris, where I constantly resided; the time and place being ascertained, the justice or injustice of this charge, will at once be seen, by an examination, of my receipts, and disbursements of public monies.---On the 4th of March 1778, I received a positive order, from Congress, to return immediately to America, to acquaint them, with the state of their affairs, in Europe; in the resolution of Congress transmitted and in the letter accompanying of it, to me, this appeared to be, the only motive, and object of my recall.---Though the treaties with France, had been concluded, and signed on the sixth of February preceding, yet they had still been kept secret, and by agreement with the Court of France, were not to be made public, in Europe, until intelligence should be received, of their being arrived, and published, in America; But several circumstances, concur'd at that time, to induce the Court of France, to change their plan, and publicly to announce, to the Court of London, their having entered into Treaties of Commerce, and Alliance, with the United States, and to dispatch, with all possible secrecy, and expedition, the fleet then at Toulon, to America, under the command of the Count D'Estaing; and the Count D'Vergennes, and Dr. Franklin, joined, in advising me, to keep my recall, and my intention to return, secret, until the fleet should sail, in which it was proposed, that I should embark.

At this time, most of the contracts, for stores, arms, clothing, &c. and for ships to transport them to America, were completed; the execution of those contracts, had been principally under my direction, but though monies had been advanced, on all of them, the accompts of the contractors, had not been brought in for settlement, and

and it was impossible for me, if I literally complied with the order of Congress, and with the urgent request, of the French Minister, and of Doctor Franklin, to go out in the fleet; to do any thing previously, towards the calling in, and settling the public, or even my private accompts; any attempt that way, would have defeated the secrecy, and dispatch enjoined me---though nothing appeared in the order of Congress, or in any of their letters, which intimated, the least dissatisfaction, with my conduct, or any suspicion of the faithful management, and application, of the public monies, yet as I had from the first, the misfortune, to have in Mr. Lee, one of my Colleagues, a most jealous, and artful enemy, and sensible, that many ill offices, had been done me in America, I was extremely desirous, to put off my return until all the transactions in which I had had, any concern for the public, should be settled, and closed, but finally, I submitted to the advice of Count D'Vergennes, and of Dr. Franklin, and contented myself, with taking from Mr. Grand, the Banker for Congress, an accompt of all the monies, received, or paid out, on accompt of Congress, up to that time, this was all that was in my power to do, and as Mr. Grand had mentioned in his accompt, the names of the persons to whom he had paid money, and as I carried out with me, the most honourable testimonials, from his Majesty, from his Minister, and from my colleague, and intimate friend Dr. Franklin, of my zeal, and integrity in the service of my country, I had no reason to apprehend, the being censured, for not having settled, and brought out with me, all the public accompts, and their vouchers, in detail; but on my arrival in Philadelphia, I soon found, that my enemies, had been, to a certain degree, successful, in poisoning the minds of the public, by insinuating, that I had become immensely rich, in the service of the public, and consequently that I must have been guilty of undue, and dishonest practices; and though I had been sent expressly, to inform Congress, of the state of their affairs in Europe, and notwithstanding the honourable character I had sustained, as their Political, and Commercial Agent in Europe, and afterwards as one of their Commissioners Plenipotentiary, I could not obtain an audience, of the body, until after six weeks attendance, and solicitation.

I then gave them verbally, a faithful detail, of the state of their affairs, in Europe, and laid before them, Mr. Grands accompt of the receipts, and payments of monies, to the time of my leaving Paris; and requested, that if their had been, any charge or insinuation against me, for mismanagement, or neglect, that I might be informed of it, and be permitted to be heard, in my defence.

I was not told of any, and though Congress appeared no way dissatisfied, with the account, I then gave them, of the state of their affairs, in Europe, and of my own conduct, in their service, and though the settlement of the public, as well as of my private accompts, pressed me to return as early as possible, to France, yet I could not obtain any resolution, of Congress, either to approve, or to disapprove, of any part of my conduct, and though I almost daily solicited, for a second audience, I did not obtain one, until late in December following.

I then gave them a written narrative of my transactions, from my leaving America in their service, until my recall and return,---Congress then appeared disposed, to take the matter up, and to examine it, and to come to some determination, on the subject, a Committee was appointed to examine the state of their foreign affairs, and into the conduct of their Commissioners, and Agents, and for greater dispatch, the Committee were ordered, to meet every evening, Saturday and Sunday evenings excepted; yet that Committee never condescended to admit me to an audience, or to ask me a single question, on the subject of their enquiry.---And though I had been sent for expressly, to inform Congress, of the state of their affairs in Europe, yet their Committee, studiously evaded, the giving me an opportunity of laying before them, any information on the subject, or of explaining any part of my own conduct, while in their service.

During more than fourteen months attendance in Philadelphia, I obtained but two audiences from Congress, and none from their Committee, whose proceeding, and report, if indeed they made any, were kept secret from me,---In December 1778, having waited five months in Philadelphia, almost daily soliciting Congress to examine my transactions, while in their service, I found that a party determined, on my ruin, had sufficient interest, to prevent
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all examination, and to bear me down, by the most mortifying delay, and neglect; I therefore resolved to lay my case, before my countrymen, and fellow-citizens, but on my first address to them, Congress resolved to give me an audience, and afterward appointed a Committee, as I have before mentioned.

As I flattered myself, that Congress had resolved, to examine, into the state of foreign affairs, and of those transactions, in which I had been a principal actor, and to come to some determination, on the subject, I could not consider myself at liberty, to proceed in publishing the state of my case; in the mean time I was attacked and abused, in the most base and outrageous manner, in the public papers,---I made no reply to the many calumnies, and falsehoods, published by a noted scribler, his associates and patrons, but earnestly requested, of Congress, and of their Committee, to grant me a hearing, and to do me justice;---but my solicitations were ineffectual, though from December 1778, to August 1779, I wrote more than thirty letters to Congress, humbly petitioning for a public examination, and tryal, yet they never condescended, to take the least notice of my requests;---In private conversation with the members I was told, that the only difficulty lay in my accompts, not being settled; to obviate this, I returned to France, on assurances from Congress, that they had appointed, and impowered a gentleman in France, to audit, and settle all their public accompts; but on my arrival in France, in July 1780, and application to him, I found that his power, was so limited, that he declined, acting under it.---I wrote immediately to Congress, soliciting for more ample powers to him, or to some other person, and set myself to put, not only my accompts, but those of my colleagues, and of every one, with whom I had transacted any business, on account of the public, in a state for being audited, and settled; and I passed more than twelve months, at Paris, at a heavy expence, flattering myself, that as Congress had made no objection, whatever, to any part of my conduct, in their service, except my not having settled my accompts, and as my enemies, both in Congress, and out of it, professed to believe, that I was a defaulter, they would not, after the prodigious expence, of time, and money, which I had been put to, de-

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lay the appointment of an auditor, to examine my acc-
compts, and to ascertain the only point in question, with
regard to me; but I heard nothing on the subject, until
November 1781, when I received a resolve of Congress,
informing me, that by the appointment of a Consul, pro-
vision was made, for the settlement of my accompts; but
in a few days after, I met with Mr. Barclay the Consul,
who to my extreme surprise, and disappointment, assured
me that he had no instructions on the subject; and a few
days after, I had the mortification, of learning, that my
letters of May, and June preceding, had been intercepted,
and published in New-York, and that the most unfavour-
able construction, had been put on them, both in America,
and in France.

This placed me in a situation, in which I believe, but
few men, have ever been so unfortunate, as to fall into.

Proscribed in my own country, and in France, and ob-
noxious to the government of this country, I submitted to
a tedious exile, in Flanders, where I remained, until the
treaty of peace, was concluded, but in the mean time, I
transmitted my accompts to Congress, and solicited a set-
tlement, and the payment of the ballance due to me; I also
sent duplicates of them to Dr. Franklin, and to Mr. Barclay.

It is now more than eighteen months, since Congress
have been in possession of my accompts, it is more than
five years, since I had either the money, or any employ-
ment for the public entrusted to my management.

Is it possible that any fraud or embezzlement commit-
ted by me, should still remain undetected? Had I been
guilty of any, would not my enemies with all the parti-
culars of my accounts in their power, have pointed them
out, and published them instead of charging me general-
ly with being a defaulter for unaccounted millions?---In
March 1778, Doctor Franklin assured Congress that he
had been an eye witness of my conduct in France, while
his colleague, and that I had acted the part of an able, ac-
tive, and faithful minister, and to his knowledge had in
various ways rendered great and important services to my
country*. In December 1782, almost five years after,
B when

* S I R,

Passy, near Paris, March 31, 1778.

MY colleague Mr. Deane being recalled by Congress, and no reasons
given, that have yet appeared here, it is apprehended to be the
effect

when from our difference in political principles, he was no way prejudiced in my favour, and when, had I been guilty of fraud or embezzlement, it was impossible but that it must have come to his knowledge; he certified, that he had *never known or suspected any cause to charge me with any want of probity in any purchase or bargain whatever, made by me for the use or account of the United States**.---To charge me with being a defaulter, and with having defrauded my country, of large sums of money, and at the same time, to evade an examination, and settlement of my accompts, by which only the justice, or injustice, of the charge, could be ascertained, is a conduct, which needs no comment, nor do I fear to rest my cause on it, and on the testimony, and certificate, of Dr. Franklin,

effect of some misrepresentation from an enemy or two at Paris, and at Nantz.---I have no doubt, that he will be able clearly to justify himself, but having lived intimately with him, now fifteen months, the greatest part of the time in the same house, and been a constant witness of his public conduct;---I cannot omit giving this testimony, though unasked, in his behalf, that I esteem him, a faithful, active, and able Minister, who to my knowledge, has done in various ways, great and important services to his country, whose interests I wish may always be by every one in her employ, as much, and as effectually promoted.

With my dutiful respects to the Congress, I have the honour to be,
Sir, your most obedient and very humble servant,

(Signed)

BEN. FRANKLIN.

Honourable Henry Laurens, President of Congress.

* Certain paragraphs having lately appeared in the English newspapers, importing that Silas Deane, Esq; formerly Agent and Commissioner Plenipotentiary of the United States of America, had sometime after his first arrival in France, purchased in that kingdom for the use of his countrymen, 30,000 muskets, &c.---that he gave three livres for each of them being old condemned arms; that he had them cleaned and vamped up, which cost near three livres more, and that for each of these he charged, and received a Louis D'or, and that he also committed similar frauds in the purchase of other articles for the use of his country; and Mr. Deane having represented, that the said paragraphs are likely to injure him in the opinions of many persons, unacquainted with his conduct while in the public service; I think it my duty, in compliance with his request, to certify and declare, that the paragraphs in question, according to my best knowledge and belief, are entirely false and that I have never known or suspected any cause to charge the said Silas Deane with any want of probity, in any purchase, or bargain whatever made by him, for the use or account of the United States.

Given at Passy, the 18th of December, 1782, signed, B. Franklin,
Minister Plenipotentiary from the United States of America, to the Court of France.

in, but clear, and convincing as these proofs are, of my innocence, I have a sufficiency of others, independent of the testimony or certificate of any man, or of the conduct of any set of men, whether friendly or inimical to me.--- In January 1776, I contracted with the Commercial Committee, of Congress, to make a voyage to France, and to purchase for the public, goods to the amount of forty thousand pounds sterling,---they engaged to furnish me with that sum in cash, or good bills, and to allow me a five per cent. commission, on the purchase ---At the same time the secret Committee, appointed me the Commercial, and Political Agent, for the United States in Europe, and directed me to purchase for them, 100 pieces of brass cannon, and arms, and cloathing, for 25,000 men, and ammunition in proportion, and to procure ships, in Europe, to transport the whole to America; on these purchases, they also stipulated, to give me five per cent. commission, and to make me a reasonable, and adequate allowance, for any political services, which I might render my country in France.---When we reflect on the situation of our affairs, at that period, it must be acknowledged, that no man was ever charged, with a more important Commission, and when the circumstances of my being ignorant of the language, as well as of the manners, and politics of the country, in which I was to execute it, without friend, or patron to advise, to countenance, or to introduce me, and without that best of all patrons, and supporters, an adequate to the purpose; when these are taken into consideration, it must also be allowed, that no Commission of this nature was ever attended with more difficulties and embarrassments.

I left Philadelphia in the month of March 1776, in a brigantine bound to Bordeaux, and such was the situation of our affairs at that time, that she sailed with ballast only, and the want of any thing, to make remittances with in a cargo;---an accident at sea, obliged her to return, and I embarked in a sloop, bound to Bermuda, and the whole of the funds, put into my hands to enable me to make the purchases, above mentioned, amounted to 2375l. sterling in bills of exchange, and an order, to receive the proceeds of a cargo, in the sloop, consigned to Mr. Tucker, of Bermuda.---The secret Committee, gave me a bill of

600l. sterling, towards my expences, these were the only sums, with which I set out, for France; at Bermuda received of Mr. Tucker, the amount of the sales of the cargo, consigned him, which he paid me in foreign coin except two bills of exchange amounting to £187 19 7½ on my arrival at Bordeaux, I put the whole of my bills into the hands of Mr. Delap, to whom I had letters.

The bills he sent on for acceptance and the foreign coin he disposed of, which amounted } £712 10
to livres, 16285 11 5, equal to

The bills received of the Commercial } 2375 0
Committee were paid

The bill for 600l. received of the secret }
Committee was protested.

The two bills received of Mr. Tucker for }
£187 19 7½ were protested, but afterwards }
paid but they were of no immediate use.

The sloop which I chartered at Bermuda } 101 16
took in logwood for ballast, which sold for }
liv. 2441 6 9 in Bordeaux, equal to

Total amount of the effective funds, in } £3189 6
my hands, on my arrival in France in June }
1776, and adding the two bills of Mr. }
Tucker, afterwards paid, } 187 19

£3377 6

Makes up the whole, on which I could depend, to execute, the immense orders, given me on account of the public; out of this I had to pay, the port charges, and other expences of the sloop, in which I arrived, and to send back, with a cargo.---Messrs. Livingston, Lewis, Alford and Morris, made remittances to Mr. Delap, partly in bills, and partly in effects of cargoes, and ordered him, after making the disbursements, which they directed, their own account, to hold the balance for my orders, to be employed by me, in executing the contract, in which they had engaged, jointly with me, for the goods, before mentioned, to the amount of forty thousand pounds sterling, but they never remitted any monies, directly to me, nor did I receive one shilling through any other channel from America, on account of Congress, but from Mr. D.

lap, excepting the sum of 13804 livres, of Monsieur Soulier, being part of a cargo, shipped by Capt. Wicks, and of a credit, given the Commissioners on him by Mr. Thomas Morris deceased.

I received of Mr. Delap at different times, 42176 12 11
 I borrowed of Mr. D. Beaumarchais as per
 his accompt,) 22811 16 0

Received of Mr. Soulier on account of my
 private expences,) 13804 0 0

Of Mr. Grand, Banker on account of ditto, 69253 7 6

Liv. 148045 16 5

Having on my arrival in France deposited in the hands of Mr. Delap, the whole of the effects brought out with me, and having never received any monies on account of Congress, from my engaging in their service to the present time, but from the persons above mentioned; it is easy to ascertain if I received more than the above sum on my private account, or for my immediate disbursements for the public. I know of no question that can arise on this subject, except it be on account of the overcharge made against me by Mr. Soulier, which I have explained in my account, and letters before Congress, and referred to Mr. R. Morris to justify my explanation.

Though the funds which I put into Mr. Delap's hands in June 1776, amounted to livres, 73870, 14, 11. and he received some remittances from Messrs. Livingston, Lewis, Alsop, and Morris, over what he paid out on their account; yet his disbursements on account of Congress, and the sums which I drew on him for on the same account: So far exceeded the whole, that in December he refused my bills, and on the 31st wrote me as follows:

"Time only permits us to inform you, that we have received a letter from A. Nesbitt, Esq. of London, returning us protested, 1200l. sterling; David White's bill of 20th of April, at 30 days sight on Serjeant Chambers and Co. 1000l. sterling; of Margaret Livingston's of 28th May, at 30 days sight, on S. Baker, £.570 9 sterling; of Ringhold and Hennesly, of the 8th of November 1775, on Serjeant Chambers and Co. so that the last remittances made us by Messrs. Livingston, Lewis and Alsop, and by Messrs. Willing and Morris,

" has

“ has been all prohibited except two small bills making
 “ together 230l. sterling. Messrs. Livingston, Lewis,
 “ and Alsop since remitted us for your account, 800l.
 “ sterling in D. Shinger's bill of the 20th of August, at
 “ 30 days sight on Ford, Courtoys and Co. of Barcelona,
 “ which is likewise returned to us protested. We are
 “ sorry for all these disappointments; but in the present
 “ situation of affairs, we look on bills as no remittance,
 “ for scarce one in ten of them is paid. The bills you
 “ forwarded us for acceptance must be returned, or lie by
 “ until funds arrive, &c.”

I will not take up the time of the public, by attempting
 to describe the distressed situation in which I found my-
 self at that period,---The whole of my scanty funds ex-
 pended, and indebt to near ten thousand pounds sterling on
 account of Congress, for which I had given bills in my
 private name, and which were refused by the House on
 which I was directed to value myself, and through whom
 remittances were to be made to me, nor the advantages
 at that time taken of our embarrassments to force us into
 a contract with the Farmers General for a quantity of to-
 bacco, to be delivered to them in France at little more
 than the one half of its then current price.

It is well known, that the Commissioners obtained one
 million of livres to be advanced them by the Farmers Ge-
 neral on these hard terms, and about the same time two
 millions from the Court, to be paid quarterly in the
 course of the year 1777. At some future time, I shall en-
 ter mutually on the history of our situation at that peri-
 od, and of the whole of the negociation in France from
 my arrival in 1776 to the signing of the treaties of Paris
 in 1778, and to my recall. At present it is sufficient to
 observe, that the money then received and promised, gave
 me as well as my colleagues a temporary relief---that the
 whole of it was paid into the hands of Mr. Grand, whose
 account now more than five years since laid before Con-
 gress, will shew to whom and to whose orders he repaid
 it. But if I received of him, as appears from his account,
 the above sum of livres 69253 7 6, and of the others in
 the whole, with that sum, livres 148045 16 5, only
 somewhat less than seven thousand pounds; what must
 or can be said of those, who for four years since have been
 charging

charging me in all your public papers, with being a defaulter for unaccounted millions? They could not have been ignorant of the state of the public account so far as I was interested in them, they were on the files of Congress in America, and in the hands of Doctor Franklin in France, open for the inspection of every one, whose interest or curiosity might excite them to an examination. But what were my disbursements during this term of more than two years on account of the public, and for my time and expences? My account before Congress shew that they amounted to a much larger sum than that which I had received, including my time and expences to America, and during my attendance on Congress, and for my return to France, they amounted to livres 258,164 9 2, or, livres 110,118 12 9 more than I had received, leaving me a creditor for that sum, equal to £.4817 18 7½ sterling. Mr. Arthur Lee in a letter to Congress of the 1st of June 1778, says, "*I find that the expence of living in character, cannot well be less than three thousand pounds sterling a year* ; and adds, "*if left to themselves, I conceive that most persons will exceed that sum*," that is, livres 68571 per annum. I was as Mr. Lee expresses it, left to myself; yet from my leaving America in 1776, until my leaving Paris to return to it in 1778, I have not charged but about eighty thousand livres for all my expences of every kind; the remainder of the liv. 258,164 9 2 was for disbursements on account of Congress, and for my time and subsequent expences, the particulars of which are in my account before Congress.

Mr. William Lee made one journey to Vienna on account of the public, and Mr. Izard who was at Paris for the education of his children, received while there a commission from Congress to the Court of Tuscany, but never went out of Paris, or quitted his family on the business of the public. The former of these gentlemen received seventy-two thousand livres, and the latter sixty thousand for their private expences; yet these men are among the loudest against me for an extravagant waste of public money.

And permit me here my countrymen and fellow citizens, to request of you, that you will examine for yourselves, or that if your distance from Philadelphia will not permit

permit you to do it, that you will demand of your Delegates in Congress, an account of all the monies ever remitted to me by Congress, and of all that ever I received on their account,---by this you will be able to form a judgment with sufficient precision, if I am a defaulter for millions or one of the public creditors. But exclusive of the above ballance due to me, after accounting for all the monies received by me, I am entitled to a commission of five per cent on goods and military stores purchased by me, agreeable to orders received from Congress to the amount of livres 4756,393 17, which makes the sum of £.238,445 0 7, including expence of postage. These goods and military stores I purchased previous to the arrival of my colleagues, in consequence of the orders given me by the secret Committee of Congress, and on which I was promised the same commission as was then given to other agents and purchasers, which was uniformly five per cent for the purchases made jointly with my colleagues, I have not charged any thing, being then in a different capacity as joint Commissioner Plenipotentiary with them. Thus it appears that instead of being a defaulter, I am a creditor of the public's, and to a large amount; and of all the public creditors, perhaps no one has suffered so much in point of interest, certainly no one so much in point of character.

But of this, I shall take notice on a future occasion. I need not take up any more of your time at present on the subject of my accounts, they have long since been before Congress, and to them I appeal to justify the general statement which I have given of my money transactions for the public. I have shewn, and it will appear from them, that from my arrival in France in June 1776, to the December following, when joined by Dr. Franklin and Mr. Lee I had had no money or next to none of the public's at any time in my hands; but on the contrary, was at that time in advance for my employers, and that afterwards until my return to America, I did not receive a sum any way equal to my expences and disbursements; and from that period to the present I have not had any public employ, or public money committed to my management. The second charge against me, is, on account of my having in May and June 1781, wrote my opinion of our public

airs to my friends in America, and advised peace and an accommodation with Great-Britain. I confess that the letters published by Rivington in New-York, as mine, do not materially differ from those which I actually wrote at that time, and which unfortunately for me were intercepted by the enemy, and that they contain the undisguised sentiments of my heart at that time; on the then apparent situation of our affairs; but I never yet heard of its being deemed a crime in a free state, for its citizens to give their opinion and advice on public affairs and measures. To suppose me to have been in the interest of the Ministers of this country, and to have wrote those letters to promote their views, is as absurd as to suppose, that I amassed an immense fortune in the service of my country; yet, although my well known circumstances and connections at that period, and previous to it, as well as since, demonstrate the absurdity and falshood of such supposition; yet both the one and the other have been not only supposed, but positively asserted by certain writers in America, who stick at nothing however extravagant.

I can hardly imagine, notwithstanding the late and present prosperous state of our affairs, that any one can have forgot the situation in which they were in 1781, when I wrote those letters, and previous to the surrender of Lord Cornwallis and his army at York. In May and in June 1781, the British forces were in the possession of the whole of our sea coast, from the Cheesapeak southward, and while they ravaged and distressed the interior country, their ships of war and cruisers intercepted almost the whole of our trade and of our supplies; we had no naval force to oppose to theirs, nor any probability at that time of our ally sending to our assistance, a naval force superior to that of the enemy. The army under General Washington was too weak of itself for any offensive operations, and Congress had neither money or credit sufficient to put it on a more respectable footing. General Washington did not scruple at that period to declare, "That without a decidedly superior fleet to that of Great-Britain in America, all opposition to the British force in America would soon be at an end." All the letters from America were in the same stile; many circumstances, at the time, my own observations and the information I was then

in the way of, led me to conclude, that there was not the least probability of there being a French fleet on our coast that campaign superior to the British. Accidents and circumstances unforeseen at that time, and those extremely improbable ones, joined to a neglect or breach of orders on the part of the British, gave the French fleet the superiority, which alone decided the fate of Lord Cornwallis and of his army at York ; had not this event happened, of which when I wrote there was not the most distant probability, the war must have terminated against us in that campaign. In this I was supported by the unanimous opinion of the best judges on the subject then in America,---was it a crime in me to write from Europe America, in the same stile in which our Generals and leading men wrote to their friends in Europe ? My letters have been published, their's have not ; this is the sole difference, except the cruel circumstance of mine having been published by the enemy, at a time when our danger was over, and when the publication could serve no other purpose, but to ruin me in the opinion of my countrymen. At the time of my writing, every thing conspired to convince me, that France had only her own interest and that of Spain in view, in the war, and that however, it might terminate, she would be very far from consulting our interest, in the peace, persuaded of this, I wrote it, to be my opinion, and for this I have been deemed an enemy, and traitor to France, as well as to the United States.

But have not events in part justified this opinion of mine ? You best know, by what intrigues, the French Court prevailed with Congress, to order our Commissioners, not to sign any treaty with Great-Britain, without the knowledge, and consent of the Court of Versailles, and thus to put our future peace, liberty, and safety absolutely into their power---nor can you I presume be ignorant, that the Court of France, having thus bound us, began to take off the mask, and to take measures with us, and to propose terms to the other powers, for excluding us, from the fisheries, and for supporting the extravagant claims of Spain to East-Louisiana, and that our Commissioners, alarmed at this, wisely ventured to break the orders, sent them from Congress, and to sign the preliminary articles, without either the knowledge, or the consent

the Ministers at Versailles.---Are not these well known facts, abundantly sufficient to justify me, for having in 1781, entertained suspicions, of the sincerity of France, in her professions of disinterested friendship to the United States?---By our treaty with Great-Britain, we are entitled to a right in her share of the Newfoundland, and Nova-Scotia fisheries, but has not France wholly excluded us from any in hers?---Does not France, at this time, encourage, and support Spain, in her claims to the richest, and most extensive, part of the territory, allowed by Great-Britain, in the late treaty, to belong to us? These attempts are not marks of friendship, but are the most unequivocal characteristics, of that insidious, interested policy, which I pointed out in my letters, and warned my friends to be on their guard against.---In my letter to Mr. Morris, I gave him my opinion, with respect to the future state of our commerce, under independant sovereignty, and the grounds, on which I was led to form it, and I shall be happy, if experience (which alone can decide in such cases) proves that my opinion, and reasoning on that subject, were erroneous and ill founded.---Apprehensive at the time, and distressed by the thought, that we must either fail in the contest, and in such case, submit to the terms of our conquerors, rendered imperious, and severe in their success, or that if successful ourselves, that in the situation, in which our country must be, on the peace, encumbered with heavy taxes, on account of the public debts, contracted by the war, and still heavier, for the future support of independant sovereignty, and at the same time, exposed, to the evils arising from internal factions, and dissensions, and from our jarring, and incompatible interests; that our democratic governments, which we had established in Congress, and in our several States, would not be found to have sufficient energy, and coercion, to establish, and maintain such a degree, of order and of due subordination, as must ever be indispensibly necessary, in governments, to prevent anarchy, and confusion; and that in such a situation, independant sovereignty, instead of proving a blessing, must become the heaviest misfortune, which could befall us;---strongly impressed by this opinion, I judged it to be my duty, to urge, and press my countrymen, by every argument, in my power, to improve

prove that important crisis, and by an accommodation, a re-union with Great-Britain, on equal, safe, and honourable terms, to secure our future peace, liberty and safety, both internal and external; I then thought that a re-union, not simply on the condition of being replaced, in the state, which we were previous to 1763 (for which alone Congress in 1774, and afterwards in 1775 petitioned) but on conditions, and terms, every way preferable, to those being governed solely by laws, of our own enacting, of being taxed only by our Assemblies, and of enjoying the same commercial privileges, and protection, as other subjects of the British empire are, or may be entitled to say, that it was then my opinion, that an accommodation and re-union on those terms, was to be preferred, to the continuation of the war, to running the risque of its certain issue, and to hazarding the dangerous experiment of independant sovereignty. This opinion of mine, has been deemed a crime in me, little short of that of high treason. But it ought to be remembered, that this was my opinion, and that I communicated it, to my friends, at a time when our prospects, were gloomy and discouraging. But we now enjoy independant sovereignty and peace, on the most favourable and honourable terms, and have obtained every thing, which we either hoped for, or demanded, and happy indeed should I be, were I certain, that none of the evils, which I apprehended in 1781, were either felt, or feared by my countrymen, at this time. In such case, I should be contented to be ridiculed or despised, for my weak, and gloomy forebodings in 1781. But General Washington in his circular letter says, "It is a question yet to be decided, whether the revolution, must ultimately be considered, as a blessing, or a curse.---A blessing or a curse, not to the present alone, for with our fate, will the destiny of unborn millions, be involved."---I ask, that these expressions of the General, after the great object of independant sovereignty, has been obtained, and ratified, and confirmed to us, by treaties, may be compared, with the expressions in my letters of 1781, on the same subject, and that my countrymen, will then say, if it was a criminal desertion of the cause of my country, or if it was an unpardonable weakness, and despondency of mind, in me, at that time.

to make a question of that which now, when success and peace have secured our independant sovereignty, is by Gen. Washington declared to be still a *question undecided* and doubtful, and that not only so as to the present day, but to future ages. If indeed, the small degree of order, of restraint and of subordination, which has for the last seven years prevailed in our country, be now thrown off, and the legislative and executive power once more return in effect, into the hands of Committees and Conventions; if in place of that subordination to law and government, of those decent, frugal, and virtuous manners and habits, of that ease, and even affluence in which our fellow-citizens, formerly lived, in peace, and safety, in a word, if instead of those manners, principles, and circumstances, which once marked our character, the reverse, should in future take place, and prevail, under a government too weak to prevent, or remedy the evils; there cannot then remain a question, on the subject; but such anarchy, and confusion, must ensue, as to render our independance, a curse, and the present, and future age, in America, as unhappy, as any ages, to be met with, in the history of civilized nations, have ever been.

The great end of civil society, is to secure to men, united in it, the great blessings of peace, of liberty, and safety, both in their persons, and in their property, and in deciding what form of government, most effectually answers this great, and beneficent purpose, experience, not theory, must direct us.

This is not a subject, for recluse Philosophers, or subtle Metaphysicians, to decide on, in their closets.---And whenever they have been referred to, they have given the preference, to Utopian, or ideal and imaginary systems of their own, before those plain and simple ones, which experience has shewn, to be practicable and safe.---But without looking abroad, to profit, by the experience of other nations, our own must now, with the utmost precision and certainty determine, this great question, as yet undecided, and bring conviction home to every one,---either that our present system of government, is preferable, to that under which we and our ancestors, for more than one century and an half were free, safe and happy; or that it is not.---Our situation previous to the late revolution, must be still fresh

fresh in our memories, and our present, cannot long be disguised, or misunderstood, by us ; from our senses, from what we see and feel, we must judge with certainty of it, and by comparing the present, with the past, this important question, must ultimately be decided.---If happily for us, it be in favour of the present, no man will more sincerely rejoice, than what I shall, on the occasion ; but if on a comparison, of our present, with our past situation, the revolution should, be found to be a curse, instead of a blessing, then indeed I shall be one of the most unhappy of men, and the sole consolation, which will be left me, will be the almost only one, which I now enjoy, a consciousness of my integrity, in the service of my country, and of the purity and rectitude of my intentions, in the opinion and advice, which in 1781, I gave in my letters to my friends in America.---Having shewn that instead of being a defaulter, I am a creditor, of the public's, to a considerable amount, and impartially stated, the contents, and objects of my letters, of 1781---I shall take my leave for the present, and submit the whole, to your candid consideration,---and whatever my fate may be, if to be restored to your good opinion, and confidence, and to the bosom of my friends, and country, or to remain far exiled from them, the first and most ardent wish of my soul, will ever be, that my country's happiness may be perpetual, in the full enjoyment of peace, liberty and happiness.

I am with great sincerity and respect

Your friend and fellow-citizen

S I L A S D E A N E.

London, August 10, 1783.

P. S. I have avoided entering on the subject, of the numerous calumnies, which have been propagated against me, by anonymous writers, it would have been endless and quite unnecessary, since every thing, which has either been said, or suggested against me, may be reduced to two questions only :

First if I acted faithfully, and was an honest steward, of the public money, while in the service of my country, and secondly, if the contents of my letters, of May and June 1781, were of such a nature, as to merit the harsh censure passed on me, in America on their account ;---in France

can expect no other, than to be condemned, it is what every one must expect to be, who calls in question, the disinterestedness of the motives of France, in the late war, or who attempts to prevent our country, from becoming virtually dependant on that power;---As to the reports, circulated here, and which may probably reach America, of my being at the levees of the Ministers, and in frequent conference, with them, and that I have acted, an unfriendly part respecting our commerce, and the like, I can with the greatest truth, and sincerity declare, that there is not the least foundation for them, I have not so much as seen, any of the Ministers, since my arrival in this country, nor have I ever had the least connection, or correspondence with any, either of the present, or late Ministers of this country.---And as to our commerce, I gave my opinion in 1781, in my letter to Mr. Morris, as to the restrictions, which I thought it would fall under, on a peace; if any part of what I then apprehended, has been realized, I am not to blame; I most heartily wish, that no part of it may ever be so, but that experience may have shown me, to have been in an error, in what I wrote on that subject.

APPENDIX

A P P E N D I X.

MY address of the 10th of August has lain by me, at this time, although when I wrote that, my intention was, as I intimated; to follow it, with a second, yet I did not purpose to do it, so soon, but have been advised by some gentlemen, lately from America, to take notice of certain reports, circulated in the United States, and in this country, respecting me: they tell me that it has been affirmed, and generally believed, in America, that I am rich, and in the most affluent circumstances, from money made in the service of my country; that I received a pension, to a large amount, from this government; that I was intimate with General Arnold, and that I had done every thing in my power, since my being in England, in prejudice of our commerce, and in particular, that I had assisted, in the writing of a pamphlet, entitled, *Observations on the American Commerce*, published by Lord Sheffield.---Now in any other circumstances, than those of the present, I need do nothing more, than to declare, that those reports are totally false and groundless; and call on the authors to produce their evidence, if they have any in support of them; but it seems that there are cases, in which a man must be put to prove simple negatives; every news paper report, tending to calumniate one, already unpopular, becomes of equal authenticity with *proofs from holy writ*.---I have shewn, that I expended and disbursed more money on account of Congress, than ever I received from them: most certainly this is not the way, to grow rich, in an employment, but I might have found means, by secret understanding, with the agents and contractors for the stores sent out to America, to have acquired a fortune, to myself: true, but the accompts of those agents and contractors have, one only of them excepted, been examined and passed by Congress, or their auditors.---The only person, who has not had his accompts passed by Congress, has received their unanimous thanks, for his services rendered them in the supplies sent out by him; the presumption from this, at least is, that Congress could have no doubt of his integrity and fairness, with which he conducted that affair.

air.---Whence then could I have accumulated a fortune,
 in the service of my country? It is true, that had Con-
 gress paid me, the balance honestly due me, I should have
 been at ease in my circumstances, for by that means, I
 should have received, some compensation, for the heavy
 losses, which I suffered by the depreciation, but this they
 have not done;---while in the service of Congress, I en-
 gaged in two commercial adventures, I was ordered by the
 secret Committee, to assume, and act the part of a mer-
 chant.---But in both of those, I was unfortunate, in one a
 total loss, by capture; in the other a failure of the man,
 whom I had given the direction of it, left me a great
 loser by it.---It is delicate and even cruel, for a man,
 who has been in trade and means, if possible, to return in-
 to that line, to expose his private circumstances, in point
 of fortune, otherways I could give the most convincing
 proof, that of the moderate fortune, of which I was pos-
 sessed in 1774, I am not at this time, master of the one
 half.---I have not at any time been extravagant, when all
 the funds of Congress in Europe, were open to me, my
 accounts will shew, that I lived but in a moderate stile.---
 I was not in a dissipated, or extravagant line of life, while
 in Philadelphia, waiting the decision, or orders of Con-
 gress; on my return to France, I was obliged to borrow
 money of Dr. Franklin, and of other friends there, for my
 support; are these marks, or evidence, of my having made a
 fortune, in the service of the public? Do they not prove
 the contrary? But my acquitting myself of one charge, may
 have some weight, some probability to the other, since if thus
 induced, and obliged to borrow for my private expences,
 at that time, I might the more easily, have been tempted,
 to accept of a pension from this government.---But Minis-
 ters, though attentive to their own interest and that of
 their friends, and liberal of the public monies, on certain
 occasions, never have such an overflow of it, as to give it
 away at hazard, or to those, who cannot render them or
 their cause, some immediate service.---If every man is to
 be bought, at a certain price, the purchaser will also esti-
 mate, the value of the man, he deals for, and not throw
 away his money, in the purchase of one, who can be of
 no kind of use to him; Of what use in 1781, could I have
 been of, to the British, or to any other Minister? I had no

public trust or state secrets which I could betray, had I been so disposed.---My popularity and influence, in the United States, had been destroyed, by the calumnies, published against me, in Philadelphia, and by the neglect and ingratitude of Congress, I most certainly could offer nothing to the Minister, and he could expect nothing from me there did not exist, any foundation, for a contract between us, if my necessities at that time, might have urged me, to seek for relief, from any quarter, or by any means still the Minister, to whom I must have applied, would not have parted with the public money, solicited and scrambled for, by so many of his friends and supporters to one, who had been declaredly and openly his enemy without some prospect, without even a certainty of an equivalent---I had none to offer, none to propose---what circumstance, what action of mine, from my return to France in 1780, to this hour tends to support this charge of my being in the pay of this government? I never corresponded with any one of the Ministers, or their agents if they really had any in France.---The Honourable Mr. Walpole with whom I contracted, a very intimate acquaintance, soon after my return to Paris, had ever been in the opposition in Parliament, yet in the Philadelphia papers, I see him mentioned, as being the agent, who engaged me in the service of the British Ministers.---But to render this charge even probable, it ought first to be shewn at least, that after my return to France, I had it in my power to be of some service to this government, and that I actually performed, or attempted to perform some service to it, but neither of these, can be shewn, or any thing tending that way.

My letters of 1781, contained no sentiments which attempted to conceal in my conversation with my countrymen in France; a convincing proof, that however erroneously I might think and reason at that time, yet that was sincere, and spoke and wrote without disguise or sinister view. My letters contained my private opinion, at that time, had not every citizen of the United States right to give his opinion on what so nearly interested him on the best or what appeared to him the best measure for securing the peace, liberty and safety of his country. If he has not that right, he is no longer a free citizen, but

e slave of arbitrary power, and it matters nothing to
 whether this power, by which he is thus enslaved, be
 edged in the hands of many tyrants or of one, except
 at it is generally better to have but one master than ma-
 . Of what service could my declaring of my senti-
 ents at that time be to the British Ministers? I had lost
 popularity and influence with my countrymen, and
 y opinion and arguments were not likely to be attended
 or to have that weight which they might otherwise
 ve been entitled to. But the publication of my letters
 New-York, is a strong proof that I was far from being
 garded as a friend, or as engaged in the British interest
 their Ministers or by their officers. Had not the
 ount de Grasse unexpectedly arrived on our coast with a
 perior fleet, Lord Cornwallis and his army, instead of
 rendering themselves prisoners of war, would have
 en victorious, and but for that, and other circumstan-
 s unforeseen and extremely improbable at the time I
 wrote, the campaign of 1781 must have terminated deci-
 vely against us; this was not simply my opinion, it was
 e opinion of our ablest and most experienced Generals.
 this situation had my letters been published, their con-
 ents might have had some weight with my countrymen,
 at to publish them immediately after events had con-
 adicted my predictions, served no purpose but to expose
 e to ridicule and abuse. Had I been in the service and
 y of this government, would its Ministers have taken
 is effectual measure to destroy my influence with my
 ountrymen, and thereby render it impossible for me to
 e of any future service to them? Nothing can be more
 extravagantly absurd than the supposition. But if I was
 the service of this government, why, after the publica-
 on of my letters had drawn on me the resentment of my
 ountrymen, and the epithets of a deserter and betrayer
 the interests of my country, did I not venture over to
 is country, to give the Ministers all the information and
 vice in my power? My countrymen in France and
 olland at the time, who were the most zealous for inde-
 endence, and the most severe against Great-Britain and
 ery thing in it, made no scruple of going over to Lon-
 on on their private affairs, while I remained in Flanders
 so obscure a situation, as to render it impossible for me

to be either of service or prejudice to any one ; and during eighteen months, neither wrote a single letter to any one in Great-Britain, or received any from thence, except on account of a few books and other trifling articles which I could not procure elsewhere. If from my arrival in France in 1780, to the signing of the preliminary articles, I had any other correspondence in this country, let it be made to appear, I boldly challenge my accusers to produce the least proof of any ; full two months since, it was published in the news-papers of this city, that I had been at Court, and was presented to his Majesty, had an audience of the Duke of Portland, dined with Mr. Fox, &c. &c. while to this hour I have not even seen his Majesty or any one of the royal family, except the Prince of Wales at a distance and on horseback, nor have I any greater knowledge of any of the other great personages with whom it has been affirmed that I am on such terms of intimacy. If it were not so, I could have no interest, no motive to deny or to conceal it.

But the truth is, that the stile of life which my circumstances have obliged me to take up, has prevented my forming a numerous acquaintance, either at court or in the city, the former I have never so much as entered, and most probable never shall. Soon after my arrival in London, Gen. Arnold called twice on me at my lodgings, and was shewn into my chamber without being announced, he appeared not to reflect in how different a situation he now was, from that in which he formerly stood, where we were in the habits of the most intimate friendship ; therefore very freely put him in mind of it, and he discontinued his visits, and I have not seen or spoke to him for more than five months past.

In my letters of the 10th of June 1781, to Mr. R. Morris, published in New-York by Rivington, I gave my opinion what the state of our commerce would be on a peace, and on the confirmation of our independant sovereignty, and I gave at large the reasons on which I had formed that opinion, by an unfortunate accident ; the contents of that letter have been made public, and to them I refer, hitherto I have seen nothing to contradict the sentiments I then entertained on this subject, but many things confirm me in them, though I most sincerely wish that
 experience

experience, the infallible test of truth in such subjects, may finally prove them erroneous, and my arguments and conclusions to have been ill founded.---But: neither for sometime before, or since my being in this country, has it been in my power, had I been disposed, to do any thing to the prejudice of our commerce, and I can with great sincerity declare, that interest, as well as a disposition independent of interested motives, will ever lead me to improve every opportunity, to do what little may be in my power, to promote the commerce of my country, on the success of which, its future happiness and prosperity, so greatly depend.

If present or future events justify my apprehensions in my letter to Mr. Morris, am I to blame? Those events do not, and cannot depend on me;---what grounds have we to expect more from Great-Britain, than what other nations and foreigners are entitled to? Or than what we are indulged with, by other nations, in their West-India possessions?

All the Spanish and Portugueze American ports, are shut against us, and against all the world, the Dutch ports of St. Eustatius and Curacoa, which islands produce nothing, are open without reserve to us, but Surinam and Demara, productive colonies, have never been but partially open, nothing which could be sent to them from Europe, to any advantage, was allowed to be received from us, nor any thing which Holland had a demand for in Europe, to be taken by us, it has ever been much the same, in the French islands, and we are not by the treaty, entitled to any thing more in future; the protection and government of the West-India possessions, cost the European powers large sums, will they be at this expence, and give other nations, the trade of them?

This nation was the first in Europe which saw its own interest, with respect to commerce, in a true light, and by the navigation act, came to a resolution, to reserve the most certain all the profits of trade, that of the carrying business, to its own subjects.---That act was the corner stone, on which the British commerce and marine rose, and on which it still rests.---Can it be expected, that this government should at this time repeal, or violate that act? That it should be dispensed with, in our favour? They who

who expect this, look for what I am convinced will never happen; ever since the existence of the navigation act all the maritime nations, in Europe, have been adopting measures, in some degree similar, and now when commerce has become the first object, with all of them, and is so well understood, they must necessarily pursue the same system.

The armed neutrality was a mere temporary expedient, France furnished her islands with provisions by it, but she lost the commerce of them, for the time, she supplied herself, with timber, and naval stores, and manned her fleets by it, but she laid the ax to the root of her navigation and commerce, so long as it existed, and she was so sensible of this, that on the day of signing the preliminaries for peace with Great-Britain, she gave orders to exclude all foreigners from her West-Indies; and the Dutch who expected to gain, lost the most by the armed neutrality; the consequences of it, and the war, into which their republic was drawn by it, will be long and sensibly felt by their commerce, perhaps never recovered.

The great object, with Lord Sheffield, is to urge the government, to persevere in a system, which for more than a century past, the nation has never deviated from, and which all the maritime, and commercial nations in Europe are now coming into.---Can any one complain of his Lordship, on this account? Or suppose that the British government, would not have done this, without foreign advice? Without information and counsel given by me? It is too ridiculous to merit any serious observations, or comment on, yet insinuations and reports of this kind, once spread have a most surprising, and lasting impression on the minds of honest, and unsuspecting people, who judging of others by themselves, cannot suspect that any one, can be so bad and wicked enough, to take up his pen, merely with the view of imposing on them.

S. D E A N E

London, October 12, 1783.

